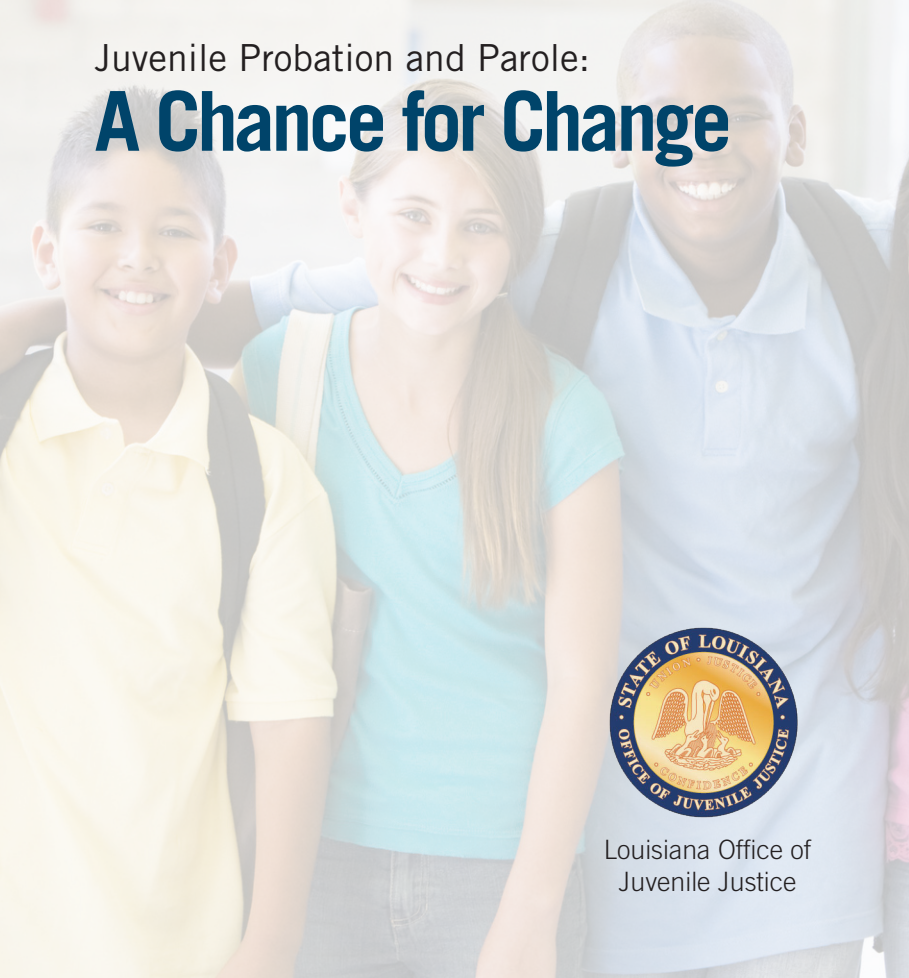


**The Choice is Yours.**



Juvenile Probation and Parole:

# **A Chance for Change**



Louisiana Office of  
Juvenile Justice



# Office of Juvenile Justice

## Mission

The Office of Juvenile Justice protects the public by providing safe and effective individualized services to youth, who will become productive, law-abiding citizens.

## Vision

OJJ is a quality system of care which embraces partnerships with families, communities and stakeholders to assist youth in redirecting their lives toward responsible citizenship.

## Guiding Principles:

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Honesty</b>      | To be honest; do everything with integrity.  |
| <b>Achievement</b>  | To be outcome-oriented in achieving results consistent with our mission.                               |
| <b>Versatility</b>  | To value, promote and support diversity and cultural competence.                                       |
| <b>Ethical</b>      | To be ethical; to do the right thing, both legally and morally.  |
| <b>Focused</b>      | To be focused on empowering people to succeed.   |
| <b>Accountable</b>  | To be accountable for the effective and efficient management of resources.                             |
| <b>Informed</b>     | To be informed and guided in our decisions by appropriate and valid data.                              |
| <b>Team players</b> | To be an effective and efficient team of professionals.  |
| <b>Harmonious</b>   | To be inclusive – involve all parties, both external and internal, who need to be part of the process. |

## HAVE FAITH: TOGETHER WE CAN HELP CHANGE LIVES.

Youth Services - Office of Juvenile Justice

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*This public document was published at a total cost of \$000. XXXXX (000) copies of this public document were published in this first printing at a cost of \$000. This document was published by the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice to, and was printed by Vicknair Printing, 23525 Eden St., Plaquemine, LA 70764, to communicate with youth and parents of youth in OJJ care/custody/supervision. This material was purchased in accordance with the standards for printing by State Agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31.*



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## Introduction to the Juvenile Justice System

You have been placed on probation under the supervision of the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ). Probation means that the judge in your case decided to give you a chance to change your behavior instead of removing you from your home.

You were arrested by local law enforcement because you allegedly committed an unlawful act. This action has brought you to the attention of the Juvenile Justice System and resulted in your voluntary or court ordered supervision by OJJ. You may be participating in a voluntary program of supervision instead of a court appearance. You may have appeared in court where the judge in your case adjudicated you a delinquent or a Family in Need of Services (FINS) and decided to place you on probation under the supervision of OJJ. In either case, **you have been given the chance to change your behavior** instead of being removed from your home and placed in a group home or a secure juvenile facility called a Center for Youth.

We hope that you will take advantage of the services offered by OJJ and our partners to change your behavior and avoid further involvement in unlawful behavior. Such a decision can change the way you spend the rest of your life.

**Only you can decide  
to accept this opportunity.**

## What is the Office of Juvenile Justice?

The Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), Youth Services, is the state agency responsible for youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system. OJJ provides services to youth who participate in programs of probation, parole, reassignment and custody for non-secure and secure care. Through partnerships with community providers, youth participating in programs may be supervised in the community while benefiting from such activities as individual and family counseling, group counseling, recreational programming, tutoring, restorative justice community service opportunities, etc.



OJJ provides services to young people to help keep them from coming into contact with the court system in the first place. OJJ contracts with community-based counseling programs that offer prevention services to youth and families in an effort to help them avoid formal contact with the juvenile justice system. Such programs include individual and family counseling programs, group counseling programs, recreational and enrichment after school programs. Youth in custody in non-secure group home placement may live in residential facilities that offer behavior modification courses, while they pursue their education at on-campus schools or local community schools.

Youth in secure care placement may be assigned to a secure care facility operated by OJJ, formerly known as the LTI System (Louisiana Training Institute) for males. Females in secure care are assigned to one of three contracted programs throughout the state.



## THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

A juvenile probation officer from OJJ has been assigned to supervise you while you are on probation. Your probation officer must keep the court advised as to whether or not you are following the conditions set by the judge so you could continue to live at home. Your probation officer wants you to succeed and will work with you and your family, if you let him/her.

**But no one can force you to do the right thing.  
Only you can do that.**

You and your parents probably have questions about your probation. This booklet is designed to answer some of the questions that are often asked. If you don't understand some information, please ask your probation officer to explain it to you or call the local OJJ-Youth Services office at the telephone number listed on the back of this booklet.

### What is probation?

Probation means that even though you have been adjudicated (found guilty) of a delinquent act (crime or offense) or in need of services (FINS, ungovernable, truant, or runaway), the judge decided not to order you removed from your home. Instead, the judge is permitting you to continue to live at home with your family and go to school or work, under certain conditions. Probation is a "trial" period during which you can show the judge, your family, and friends that you can "do right."

During your probation, you may be referred to programs in your community to assist you, your family and your probation officer in addressing your needs. There are many community programs to help you become a law-abiding citizen who remains out of court for the rest of your life. Some examples of the community programs are Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP), day treatment programs, substance abuse programs, Tracker/Mentor program, vocational rehabilitation programs and counseling agencies. Referrals to community programs are made to help you work on the areas you and your family have identified that need improvement.



In some circumstances, if you do not follow the conditions the judge imposed, you may face sanctions or consequences, such as electronic monitoring. Your probation could be revoked, which means you could be placed in the custody of OJJ, removed from your home and placed in either a group home or a secure care facility to serve your entire sentence, regardless of how long you have already been on probation.

## **What is parole?**

Parole is the process by which a judge suspends the remaining sentence (commitment) of a juvenile already serving time in the secure care system and permits the return to the community under certain conditions. If you fail to follow the conditions of parole, your parole may be revoked and you will return to secure care to serve out the remaining time of your sentence, regardless of how long you have been on parole.

## **What is Reassignment?**

Reassignment is similar to parole, except that the juvenile remains in the legal custody of OJJ when he/she is released to the community. While on reassignment your sentence continues to run. If you fail to follow a condition of reassignment you can be returned to secure care without benefit of a formal court hearing. Since your sentence continues to run while you are on reassignment, if you are returned to secure care you would only have to serve out the original balance of your sentence. Reassignment is only available to juveniles who complete the FAST Track Program.

## **How often will I see my Probation Officer?**

Depending on the seriousness of your offense, your past history of delinquent behavior and problems at home or school, your probation officer will assign you to a level of supervision, which will state the minimum number of times per month you will be seen. You may be required to see your probation officer every other week or only every other month. Your supervision level will be reviewed every three months. As your behavior improves, your probation officer will probably see you less often. You must contact your probation officer as required, even if it is more than you think is necessary.



## **How do I get in touch with my Probation Officer in an emergency?**

The probation office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. You may call the office any time during these hours and speak to your probation officer, or, if your probation officer is out of the office, to the supervisor. The office's telephone number is found on the last page of this booklet. Your probation officer will tell you how to reach our Duty Officer for emergencies at night, on the weekends and holidays. Please remember that this is for true emergencies. The Duty Officer may not be familiar with your specific case.

You or your parents do not have to wait for your probation officer to contact you. If you or your parents need to contact your probation officer between visits, you should call our office.

## **Will my friends, teachers, or my boss know that I am on probation?**

Juvenile records are confidential, which means very few people will know you are on probation, unless you tell them. Because your probation officer must check on your school attendance and attendance at your job, the school principal or your boss may know that you are on probation. The officer will only contact these people for information to help him/her work with you and your family. Your probation officer cannot tell these people what you did or anything else about your probation unless you and your parents give permission.

## **How do I get off probation, parole or reassignment?**

You should have received a copy of the court order placing you on probation, parole or reassignment. In addition to outlining the conditions of your probation, parole or reassignment, this order tells you how long you will be supervised by OJJ. The order will tell you exactly what charges you were adjudicated (convicted) on, the conditions you must follow while on probation and how long you could be on probation. Exactly how long you remain on probation will, to a large extent, depend on you.

This order will remain in effect until one of three things happen:

- You reach the full-term date specified on the order and imposed by the judge.



- The order is changed (modified) because you have done well and followed the conditions of your probation, and the probation and parole officer and the judge feel you should be released early.
- The order is changed or modified because you have violated the conditions of your probation, parole or reassignment. If you don't follow the conditions of your probation, the judge could revoke (cancel) your probation, place you in custody of OJJ and order you removed from your home.

## How important is it that I pay restitution, fines, or supervision fees ordered by the court?

It is very important that you comply with all conditions of probation, including paying restitution, fines and supervision fees. If you fail to pay what the judge has ordered, **your probation could be revoked**. If you cannot pay, you should let your probation officer know. It may be possible to make alternative arrangements.

Parents or guardians are responsible for paying court-ordered supervision fees. The probation officer will explain the procedure to you. Special self-addressed envelopes will be made available for your use.

**Probation fees must be paid in the form of a money order or cashier's check. DO NOT SEND CASH OR PERSONAL CHECKS.**

## If I have to leave Louisiana for any reason, do I have to contact my probation officer?

If you have to leave Louisiana for any reason, you **MUST** get the approval of your probation officer **BEFORE** you leave. It makes no difference if you will be out of the state for a few hours, a day or if your family is moving permanently. If you plan to move out of the state permanently, you must let your probation officer know as soon as possible so the judge can be advised. Arrangements will be made to transfer your supervision to the other state.

## What if I don't like my probation officer or I don't think I'm being treated fairly?

You can't change probation officers. A change will be considered only under exceptional circumstances. If you or your parents think your probation officer



is being unfair, you have the right to file a grievance. OJJ policy prohibits staff from mistreating or abusing youth in any way. The grievance policy should have been explained to you at the time you were placed on probation. If you are having problems with your probation officer, you or your parents should contact the Regional Manager, whose name and telephone number are on the back of this booklet. The Regional Manager will try to settle the matter, and will tell you how to file a grievance if you are not satisfied. You may then appeal to the next level, up to the level of the Deputy Secretary.

## **What happens if I get arrested again?**

If you are arrested again, you or your parents should contact your probation officer as soon as possible. You are not presumed to be guilty because you are arrested. If the district attorney files charges against you, you will have to return to court and if the judge finds you guilty, your probation may be extended or revoked. The seriousness of the new offense and your past history may affect your sentence or disposition on the new charge.

## **What happens if I am placed in OJJ custody? How long can I stay in a residential placement?**

If you are placed in the custody of OJJ, you will probably be removed from your home and placed in one of the secure Centers for Youth or one of the group homes (non-secure care) located around the state. The length of your sentence will depend on the offense you committed, your history and how you behaved on probation. You could receive the same amount of time an adult would get for the same crime, up to your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (sometimes called juvenile life).

If you commit certain violent crimes, such as murder or rape, the law requires the judge to sentence you to remain in secure care until your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. But for other offenses, the judge can give you a shorter sentence. Depending on your behavior in the placement, the judge could also grant you an early release.

If you are 14 years old or older, you may be tried as an adult for certain violent offenses.

**If you are tried as an adult and found guilty  
you will be sentenced to an adult prison.**





## What is a secure Center for Youth?

OJJ operates (three) secure care facilities for males in a system formerly known as the LTI System (Louisiana Training Institute). These Centers for Youth are the juvenile equivalent of prisons where residents are housed in locked facilities under direct supervision of staff.

The regional Centers for Youth house male residents. One is near Baton Rouge, another is in Monroe, and one is in Bridge City near New Orleans.

OJJ tries to place youth in a secure care facility as close as possible to their home so youth may have as much family involvement as possible. Males receive direct intake services at the assigned facility, where they receive initial evaluation and testing. All juveniles going into secure care receive a physical and dental exam, educational testing and mental health screening before being assigned to the appropriate facility.

Short term offender programs which last from 90 to 180 days, called the FAST Track Program, are available at all three secure care facilities for certain offenders, according to the judge's order.

Female offenders usually are tested while in detention centers, then placed in programs throughout the state where OJJ has contracts for services to girls. Female offenders are assigned directly to one of three facilities:

Ware Youth Center in Coushatta

Florida Parishes Juvenile Detention Center in Covington

Terrebonne Parish Juvenile Detention Center in Houma

Each secure care facility operates a state-approved alternative school, offers vocational training and has a social services department that provides counseling. Every youth in a secure program attends school on the grounds of the facility unless they have already received a high school diploma or GED. In some cases, youth who have a diploma or GED may take college courses by correspondence or at a community college. Each youth is also assigned a counselor and a case manager. There are a number of special programs for sex offending youth, violent and disruptive offenders, and youth needing substance abuse treatment.



## **OJJ REGIONAL OFFICES**

### **Alexandria Regional Office**

Johnny Qualls, Regional Manager  
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Alexandria, LA 71301  
Tel. 318.487.5252; Fax 318.487.5767

### **Baton Rouge Regional Office**

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Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
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### **Sub-office:**

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### **Lake Charles Regional Office**

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### **Natchitoches Regional Office**

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Fax 318.357.3243

### **New Orleans/Jefferson Regional Office**

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731 St. Charles Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
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### **Shreveport Regional Office**

Kristi Martin, Regional Manager  
1525 Fairfield Ave., Suite 1053  
Shreveport, LA 71101  
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### **Tallulah Regional Office**

Ruth Stephens, Regional Manager  
508 East Bayou Drive  
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### **Thibodaux Regional Office**

Kelly Clement, Regional Manager  
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**[www.ojj.la.gov](http://www.ojj.la.gov)**

My probation officer is \_\_\_\_\_

Other important information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Administrative Team

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